

THE ART GALLERY OF TORONTO

NEWS AND NOTES

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Sketch of Some Fishermen, by Francesco Guardi (Italian, 1712-1793). This brush drawing on paper, $4\frac{3}{16} \times 9\frac{3}{16}$ inches, is now in the Gallery's collection as a gift from the Junior Women's Committee Fund.

THREE DRAWINGS FOR THE GALLERY FROM THE BLACK AND WHITE BALL

by Françoise Jeanty

Last year's Art Gallery Ball was a resounding success, and the proceeds (part of the Junior Women's Committee Purchase Fund) were entrusted to Mr. Martin Baldwin. As befitted the Black and White theme of the Ball, he chose three drawings for the collection of the Art Gallery.

These drawings, by Francesco Guardi, Matisse, and Giacometti, are as dissimilar as possible, and yet are related by their elegance and quality.

Venetian by birth, Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) lived well but obscurely, sharing a studio with his brother Gian Antonio. They often produced works which were simply signed: Guardi.

The brothers shared with Canaletto the 18th century delight with air and light. Francesco Guardi's paintings are often simply lines on a vaporous background, although he never degenerates into the mere prettiness of many of his contemporaries. His drawings are amongst the most significant of his works. In them he shows a great freedom, unbound by academic shackles.

The *Sketch of Some Fishermen* (illustrated), a little scene on the banks of a canal, is active and alive. Fishermen are getting their boats ready, their lines untangled and their moorings straight. Others are talking and the gentleman on the left, puffing on his pipe, is criticizing everything. The man in the

boat has interrupted his work to make a point. Guardi's brush has been observant, quick and used almost like a pen.

At the time Henri Matisse (1869-1954) was drawing his sensual, linear nudes, he had participated in the explosive experience of Fauvism with its emphasis on form and pure colour.

In Morocco he had discovered the fruity languor of oriental women and, back in Nice, he was working in a more realistic style. The many etchings and drawings of those years (c. 1929) show a remarkable spontaneity.

The *Odalisque Couchée* (pen and ink on paper) is an appealing example of the new sureness which the master was acquiring. The lines defining the woman's body seem to float on the paper. Matisse here has made use of the peculiarly French quality of careful omission. Any shadow or artificial illusion of volume is avoided, yet his modelling is evident and curves are written in by line alone. With a few indications such as a necklace, tufts of hair, and the softness of printed cushions he has given the drawing a feeling of perfumed idleness completely fitting to the model.

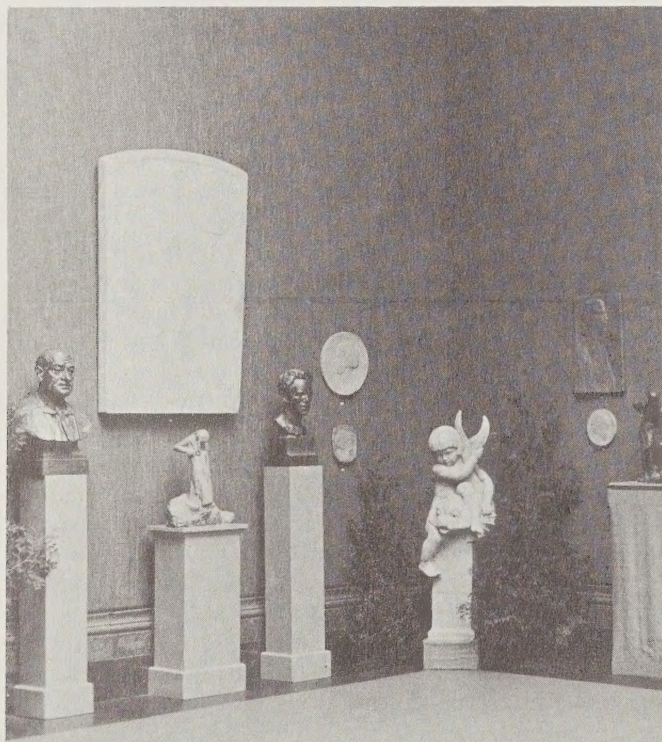
The simplicity of Matisse's drawing is the result of countless studies which made him say, in a letter to a friend, that he "could draw with his eyes shut".

Son of a painter, Alberto Giacometti was born in

(continued on last page)



To our modern outlook of functional simplicity the methods of display of yesteryear seem static or non-existent. Temporary exhibitions were as overcrowded and badly displayed as permanent collections. The arrangement in the above photograph — a view of the Square Gallery in the Art Gallery of Toronto, circa 1920 — appears to us to be lacking in taste. Details such as the 'pleated apron' effect around the stand of the architectural model, strike us as amusing and are made more so by the oddly placed chairs. Nevertheless, this was the fashion of the time.



The arrangement of sculpture creates problems quite different from those of hanging paintings. The above display of an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1928 detracts from the pieces of sculpture: they seem to have been pushed against the wall to make things simple for cleaning, rather than to present the sculpture to its best advantage.

NEW WAYS OF DISPLAY...

During the first quarter of this century, and even later, many museums and galleries continued their nineteenth century arrangement of collections and appeared to be little more than badly lit depositories of objects, paintings and sculpture. Little or no effort was made to present the collections in the best possible manner.

In the past few years gallery authorities have come to realize that methods of display and installation must keep pace with the growing interest of the public, and that the better a painting or piece of sculpture is displayed and lighted the more complete is one's assessment and enjoyment of it.

We know that few works of art were created with the intention of being seen among several hundreds of their kind as part of a concentrated emotional and intellectual experience. This fact, along with the recent preoccupation with display has led, in several museums, to a review of collections. Many have been re-selected and deliberately reduced to form part of completely re-designed



This view of the Square Gallery some thirty years later indicates the present day reaction. The contemporary trend is to exhibit only the better or best examples in a collection instead of showing all there is. Ample 'breathing space' is allowed for each painting in order that it be seen clearly without encroachment by a neighbour.

... NEW WAYS OF SEEING

rooms and galleries. For permanent collections, the most radically simple settings have been created, and in some cases only a few elements suggest rather than imitate the period of the paintings.

Before the war the Dutch galleries were exemplary in this field. Today the majority of Italian galleries certainly lead the way. Their display techniques are startlingly different and reveal impeccable taste. At the Capodimonte Palace in Naples, for example, millions of lire have been spent on keeping the display technique out of sight. The visitor may wonder why he should feel so much at ease in this picture gallery since he sees nothing but pictures on bare walls: this is because years of thought have gone into finding unobtrusive means of stimulating his curiosity, of sparing him exhaustion, boredom and discomfort.

W. B.



A piece of sculpture, in most cases, must be seen in the round, and should therefore be placed in such a manner that it can be seen from all sides. When the pieces are small they should be placed on high stands and this may create the impression of a forest of pedestals. This problem is often overcome by careful arrangement of groups of pieces.

The above arrangement shows the large figures as free standing, independent elements in the gallery, permitting the spectator to move freely around them.



Still Life with Walnuts, by Hubert van Ravesteyn (Dutch, 1638-1691) was given to The Art Gallery of Toronto by Mrs. W. Redelmeier and her family in appreciation of the long service to the Gallery of Martin Baldwin, Esq., Director Emeritus. The Redelmeier family have been faithful supporters of the Gallery since their arrival from Holland in 1939. In 1940 the late Mr. Redelmeier and Mrs. Redelmeier gave to the Gallery *Peasants' Wedding*, by Pieter Brueghel the Younger. This was the first of a number of pictures the Gallery has received from the family.

THREE DRAWINGS (continued)

Switzerland in 1901, worked in Geneva and Rome, and has lived since in Paris. He contributed vigorously to the Surrealist movement, with poems, articles, sculpture and drawings. Slowly going back to nature for inspiration his mature sculptural style has become fully realized and, since 1940, he has been drawing and painting with equal intensity.

Everyone is familiar with the long, attenuated figures which, when Giacometti places them in space, become committed to each other in a most compelling manner. They express, by themselves, and by their relation to the rest of the group, the anxiety and loneliness of modern man. The artist's romanticism, his preoccupation with feeling rather than form for its own sake, as well as his handling of space are well illustrated in the *Interior* now in the Art Gallery's collection.

In this sketch atmosphere is not transparent; it is visible, one is tempted to say tangible. The vague figure in the centre disappears in the continuity of distance between the eye of the viewer and the background volumes of furniture. With nervous, biting pencil strokes Giacometti has exposed his restless seeking, his questions rather than his answer to the unending problem, so dear to Cézanne, of separation between space and volume. The power and poetry of all of Giacometti's graphic works lie in this partial taming of space which always seems to escape the human figures in it, rendering them prisoners of the very world they attempt to conquer.

The three drawings described here will be on display at the Gallery throughout the summer.

VAN GOGH EXHIBITION REPORT

The van Gogh Exhibition is now Gallery history and there is probably no need to report on its enormous success — an attendance of 114,075 in the 31 days it was in Toronto. However, the Gallery would like to express its appreciation to the many firms and individuals who helped assure that success, and to tell members how many people were concerned with making the show run smoothly.

An army of helpers, numbering well over 800, volunteered to staff the sales desks. This amateur sales force, recruited from clubs and organizations in the city as well as from the Gallery membership, sold 30,000 post cards, 3,000 reproductions, 19,000 catalogues and 1,300 books!

When planning advertising in the daily newspapers, the Gallery asked several firms to help by sponsoring ads. This appeal resulted in twenty-eight sponsored newspaper advertisements and sixteen sponsored subway posters—valuable advertising the Gallery could not have placed with its limited budget. Many firms which could not sponsor advertising nevertheless accepted and distributed a total of 2,000 posters.

The huge sunflower in front of the building, which attracted so much attention to the Art Gallery, was constructed through the generosity of Philips Electronics Industries Limited.

We could go on for pages if we were to mention everyone who contributed in some way to the exhibition — by lending us wheelchairs and an ice cream freezer, by giving us fresh hyacinths every week to put in the Sculpture Court, and so on.

We recognize with gratitude the Gallery's obligation to these donors, and trust that they will consider the presentation of future comparable exhibitions as their thanks.

We are happy to say that such generous support for the Gallery is not confined to major exhibitions. Since November a new billboard has been circulating around Toronto, urging people to visit the Gallery and the Museum. E. L. Ruddy Co. Ltd. designed and produced the board as a public service. Its present (third) location is at Eglinton and Braemar, one block west of Avenue Road; it will continue to be moved around the city for a year.

SOME FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

May 18 to June 18, Sculptors' Society of Canada and an exhibition and sale of Garden Sculpture, presented by the Women's Committee.

June 24 to September 24, Summer Exhibition of selections from the Gallery's Collection, and 11 paintings from the Albright Gallery in Buffalo.

September 29 to October 22, Toronto Collects. Contemporary Canadian paintings from private Toronto collections.

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